

## C100 First-Class Mail

**Summary** C100 describes maximum weight and size for First-Class Mail, including pieces mailed at card rates. Also described are the definitions, specifications, and positioning of facing identification marks (FIMs).

### 1.0 DIMENSIONS

**Maximum Weight and Size** Each piece may not weigh more than 70 pounds. Matter at First-Class Mail rates cannot exceed 13 ounces. First-Class Mail weighing more than 13 ounces is Priority Mail ([E120](#)). The combined length and girth of a piece (i.e., the length of its longest side plus the distance around its thickest part) may not exceed 108 inches. (Lower size or weight standards apply to mail claimed at certain rates or addressed to certain APOs and FPOs.)

**Minimum** Pieces are subject to the minimum standards in [C010](#) and may be subject to other minimum dimensions, based on the standards for specific rates.

**Two or More Packages** Two or more packages may be mailed as a single parcel, if they are about the same size or shape or if they are parts of one article, if they are securely wrapped or fastened together, and if they do not together exceed the weight or size limits.

### 2.0 CARDS CLAIMED AT CARD RATES

**Postcard Dimensions** Each card (i.e., each stamped card or postcard or each half of a double stamped card or postcard) claimed at a card rate must be:

- Rectangular.
- Not less than 3-1/2 inches high, 5 inches long, and 0.007 inch thick.
- Not more than 4-1/4 inches high, or more than 6 inches long, or greater than 0.016 inch thick.

**Other Cards** A card that does not meet the applicable standards in [2.0](#) must not bear the words "Postcard" or "Double Postcard."

**Stock** [\[10-3-02\]](#) A card must be of uniform thickness and made of unfolded and uncreased paper or cardstock of approximately the quality and weight of a stamped card (i.e., a card available from the Postal Service). A card must be formed either of one piece of paper or cardstock or of two pieces of paper permanently and uniformly bonded together. The stock used for a card may be of any color or surface that permits the legible printing of the address, postmark, and any required markings.

**Acceptable Attachment** [\[10-3-02\]](#) A card may bear an attachment that is:

- A paper label, such as a wafer seal or decal affixed with permanent adhesive to the back side of the card, or within the message area on the address side (see [2.6](#)), or to the left of the address block.
- A label affixed with permanent adhesive for showing the delivery or return address.
- A small reusable seal or decal prepared with pressure-sensitive and nonremovable adhesive that is intended to be removed from the first half of a double card and applied to the reply half.

**Unacceptable  
Attachment**  
2.5

A card may not bear an attachment that is:

- a. Other than paper.
- b. Not totally adhered to the card surface.
- c. An encumbrance to postal processing.

**Address Side**  
2.6

**[10-3-02]** The address side of a card is the side bearing the delivery address and postage. The address side may be formatted to contain a message area. Cards that do not contain a message area on the address side are subject to the applicable standards for the rate claimed. For the purposes of **2.0**, miscellaneous graphics or printing, such as symbols, logos, or characters, that appear on the address side of cards not containing a message area are generally acceptable provided the items are not intended to convey a message. Cards claimed at the Presorted or automation card rates that contain a message area on the address side must be divided vertically or horizontally and meet the following additional standards, as applicable:

a. Vertically divided cards.

- (1) The address side of the card must be divided into a right portion and a left portion, with or without a vertical rule. The left portion is the message area.
- (2) The delivery address, postage, and any USPS marking or endorsement must appear in the right portion. The right portion must be at least 2-1/8 inches wide (measured from the right edge of the card, top to bottom inclusive).
- (3) For cards claimed at the Presorted rate, nondelivery address information may extend into the right portion only above the address block and if the information is shaded or surrounded by a border that has at least 1/8 inch clearance between the delivery address block and the border. Mailers may choose not to shade or border the nondelivery address information if there is at least 1/8 inch of clear space around the delivery address block.
- (4) For cards claimed at the automation rate, the standards for automation-compatible mail in **C810** and **C840** must be met.

b. Horizontally divided cards.

- (1) The address side of the card must be divided into an upper portion and a lower portion, with or without a horizontal rule. The portion of the address side that does not contain the delivery address is the message area.
- (2) **[4-3-03]** The delivery address, postage, and any USPS marking or endorsement must appear within the portion containing the delivery address. As an alternative, when the delivery address appears within the lower portion, it is permissible for the postage, return address, and any USPS marking or endorsement to appear in the upper portion. The portion bearing the delivery address must be at least 1-1/2 inches high (measured from the top or bottom edge of the card, as applicable, right edge to left edge inclusive).
- (3) For cards claimed at the Presorted rate, nondelivery address information may extend into the portion containing the delivery address only if it appears above the address block and if the information is shaded or surrounded by a border that has at least 1/8 inch clearance between the delivery address block and the border. Mailers may choose not to shade or border the nondelivery address information if there is at least 1/8 inch of clear space around the delivery address block.



- (4) For cards claimed at the automation rate, the standards for automation-compatible mail in [C810](#) and [C840](#) must be met.

### Special Rules for Single-Piece Rate Cards

2.7

**[10-3-02]** Cards claimed at the single-piece card rate that have the format characteristics in [2.6a\(3\)](#) or [2.6b\(3\)](#) and are part of a mailing of 200 or more identical pieces must:

- Have addresses that include the correct ZIP Code or ZIP+4 code.
- Have postage paid with permit imprints, meter stamps, or precanceled stamps.
- [4-3-03]** Be prepared under [M130.2.0](#).

### Tearing Guides

2.8

**[10-3-02]** A card may have perforations or tearing guides if they do not eliminate or interfere with any address element, postage, marking, or endorsement and do not impair the physical integrity of the card.

### Double Cards

2.9

**[10-3-02]** A double card (i.e., a double stamped card or double postcard) consists of two attached cards, one of which is designed to be detached by the recipient and returned by mail as a single card. Double cards are subject to these standards:

- The reply half of a double card must be used for reply only and may not be used to convey a message to the original addressee or to send statements of account. The reply half may be formatted for response purposes (e.g., contain blocks for completion by the addressee).
- A double card must be folded before mailing and prepared so that the address on the reply half is on the inside when the double card is originally mailed. The address side of the reply half may be prepared as business reply mail, courtesy reply mail, meter reply mail, or as a merchandise return service label.
- Plain stickers, seals, or a single wire stitch (staple) may be used to fasten the open edges of a double card if affixed so that the inner surfaces of the cards can be readily examined. Fasteners must be affixed according to the applicable preparation requirements for the rate claimed.
- The first half of a double card must be detached when the reply half is mailed for return.

## 3.0 ENCLOSURES

**[10-3-02]** Enclosures in double postcards prepared under [2.0](#) are prohibited at card rates. Envelopes and cards enclosed in automation rate First-Class Mail are subject to the corresponding standards in [C810](#).

## 4.0 NONMACHINABLE PIECES

Letter-size pieces (except card rate pieces) that weigh 1 ounce or less and meet one or more of the nonmachinable characteristics in [C050.2.2](#) are subject to the nonmachinable surcharge (see [E130](#) and [E140](#)). Nonletters (flats and parcels) that weigh 1 ounce or less are subject to the nonmachinable surcharge if any one of the following applies (see [C010.1.3](#) for how to determine the length and height of a mailpiece):

- The piece is greater than 1/4-inch thick.
- The length is more than 11-1/2 inches or the height is more than 6-1/8 inches.
- The aspect ratio (length divided by height) is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5.



5.0 PARCELS

For the purposes of adding Delivery Confirmation or Signature Confirmation, a First-Class Mail parcel is defined as any piece that:

- a. Has an address side with enough surface area to fit the delivery address, return address, postage, markings and endorsements, and special service label; and,
- b. Is in a box or, if not in a box, is more than 3/4-inch thick at its thickest point.

6.0 FACING IDENTIFICATION MARK (FIM)

**Use** The facing identification mark (FIM) serves to orient and separate certain types of First-Class Mail during the facing-canceling process. The appropriate FIM is required on all letter-size business reply mail (BRM) under [S922](#). The appropriate FIM also is required on letter-size courtesy reply mail (CRM) and meter reply mail (MRM) provided as enclosures in automation rate mailings under [C810](#). Letter-size mail with IBI printed with nonfluorescent ink directly onto the envelope by an IBI meter or a PC postage system must use FIM D. A FIM must not be used on any other type of mail.

**Pattern** The FIM pattern is a nine-bit binary code represented by vertical bars (with corresponding space element). A printed bar is considered binary 1; a nonprinted bar (placeholder), binary 0. The required FIM pattern as shown below depends on the type of mail and the presence of a POSTNET barcode as follows:

- a. FIM A is used for CRM and MRM with a preprinted barcode. (FIM A binary code is 110010011.)
- b. FIM B is used for BRM without a preprinted BRM ZIP+4 barcode. (FIM B binary code is 101101101.)
- c. FIM C is used for BRM with a preprinted BRM ZIP+4 barcode. (FIM C binary code is 110101011.)
- d. FIM D is used for letter-size First-Class Mail with IBI printed with nonfluorescent ink directly on the envelope. (FIM D binary code is 111010111.)

Name	Pattern	Use	POSTNET Barcoded?
FIM A		Courtesy reply mail Meter reply mail	Yes
FIM B		Business reply mail	No
FIM C		Business reply mail	Yes
FIM D		IBI meters and PC Postage systems	Not required

**Specifications**

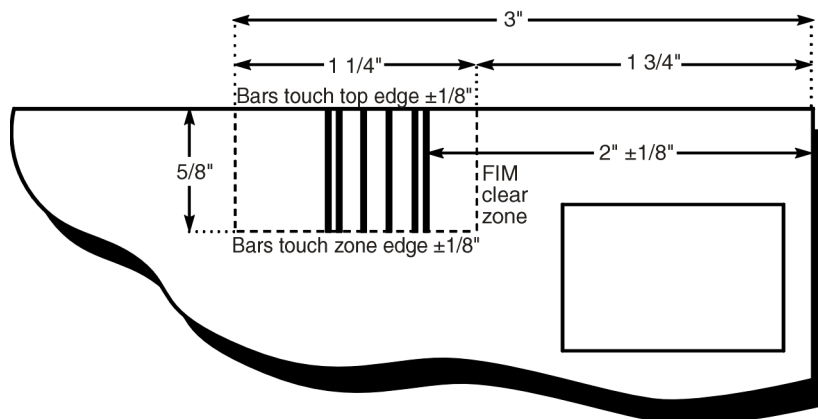
6.3

The FIM must meet these specifications:

- a. A FIM clear zone to the upper right of the address side of the mailpiece must be maintained and must contain no printing other than the FIM. [Exhibit 6.3](#) shows the FIM position and the FIM clear zone as defined by these boundaries:
  - (1) Left: 3 inches from the right edge of the piece.
  - (2) Right: 1-3/4 inches from the right edge of the piece.
  - (3) Top: top edge of the piece.
  - (4) Bottom: 5/8 inch from the top edge of the piece.
- b. The FIM bars must be 5/8 inch ( $\pm 1/8$  inch) high and 1/32 inch ( $\pm 0.008$  inch) wide and positioned as follows:
  - (1) The right edge of the rightmost bar of the FIM must be 2 inches ( $\pm 1/8$  inch) from the right edge of the piece.
  - (2) The tops of the FIM bars must be no lower than 1/8 inch from the top edge of the piece. The tops of the bars may extend over the top edge of the piece to the back (flap) of the piece if at least a 1/2-inch bar height is maintained on the address side.
  - (3) The bottoms of the FIM bars must touch the bottom boundary of the FIM clear zone or be no more than 1/8 inch above or below this boundary.

**Position of FIM**

Exhibit 6.3

**Dimensional Tolerances**

6.4

Extraneous ink must not cause a FIM bar to exceed the specifications in [6.3](#). The combined effects of positional skew (slant of the entire FIM) and rotational skew (slant of the individual FIM bars) must be limited to  $\pm 5$  degrees from the perpendicular edge of the printed FIM to the top edge of the mailpiece. Mail required to bear a FIM is considered nonmailable when the FIM has insufficient ink coverage, improper measurement, or ink in the space between the bars or when the FIM is enlarged or reduced. Camera-ready positives of FIMs, which must not be enlarged or reduced, are available at no charge from the USPS.

**Reflectance**

6.5

There must be at least a 30% print reflectance difference between the ink used for printing the FIM and the background material on which the FIM is printed in the red and green portions of the optical spectrum when measured with a USPS or USPS-licensed envelope reflectance meter.

